

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (FL-13) announced Wednesday that in less than 24 hours, more than 70 House members have co-sponsored his resolution to open health care talks to the public. Buchanan's resolution, H. Res. 847 would put the House on record against secret, closed-door deals on health care reform legislation.

"Democracy thrives best when the people are fully involved and engaged," said Buchanan on the floor of the House. "I have introduced a resolution demanding that the critical decisions made on the sweeping health care reform bill now before Congress be conducted under the watchful eye of the American people."

Buchanan noted, "In the past, massive legislative measures have been written in the middle-of-the-night by a handful of members and staff, and then quickly passed into law before the American people have a chance to even see what the final version looks like, let alone determine how they feel about it."

The New York Times has reported on a disturbing pattern of House leadership skirting open access by allowing small groups of conference committee members to meet privately and ABC News reported earlier this year that the \$1 trillion stimulus bill was passed after "closed-door negotiations."

"The State of Florida leads the nation with one of the toughest right-to-know laws in the country," added Buchanan. "Florida's strong Sunshine Law guards against back-room deals and secret negotiations by government officials. It's time for Congress to follow Florida's lead and ensure that any conference committee meeting on health care reform be conducted in the light of day and under full public view."